

Workshop Summary

Environmental protection of the High North – How to protect the Arctic from afar?

**Expert Workshop at the German Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt, UBA),
Bismarckplatz 1, 14193 Berlin, 24 October 2018, 9.00 to 17.00**

The Arctic is home to unique habitats that are increasingly threatened by the effects of climate change and the release of pollutants. As the region warms up and becomes more accessible, also the planning and conduct of economic activities puts more stress on the region's ecosystems. Due to the inevitable linkages between Arctic and non-Arctic regions, Arctic states and states that do not directly border Arctic regions are responsible to promote environmental protection of the region.

The expert workshop aimed to enable exchange and discussion on how Arctic Council observers can engage strategically and practically in Arctic environmental protection. In an exchange with states that are active in the High North, indigenous communities, businesses, research, and civil society, potential solutions were developed for a sustainable development in the Arctic that allows reconciling a wide spectrum of interests in the region. Topics included in particular climate change and air pollution control, shipping, and tourism.

1. Presentations and panels

R. Andreas Kraemer (Ecologic Institute) opened the workshop and moderated the plenary exchanges throughout the day. His summary is included in Annex 2.

Ms. Heike Herata (German Environment Agency, UBA) welcomed the participants to the workshop on behalf of the hosting UBA. She also highlighted Germany's and its environmental department's existing level of engagement on Arctic issues, including the Arctic Council's work.

Her Excellency Ms. Ritva Koukku-Ronde (Ambassador of Finland to Germany) underlined the importance of the Arctic Council for the Finnish Chairmanship and stressed the timeliness of the workshop's topic: Global climate change, the rapidly changing Arctic environment, and increasing human stressors would require shared efforts from Arctic and non-Arctic states alike.

Hendrik Schopmans (Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, IASS) started the plenary session with his overview on "Arctic Shipping and the Environment: Trends, Impacts and Governance". He focused on the regulations put in place by the Polar Code by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Mr. Schopmans also identified remaining gaps in environmental governance, such as a ban on Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) in the Arctic, mitigation of greenhouse gases from shipping and waste management. Non-Arctic states could support more stringent international measures under the IMO and cooperate with Arctic states on the necessary infrastructure in the Arctic.

The following Panel widened the discussion to give space to a variety of insights regarding the "Perspectives of Arctic Council actors on the protection of the Arctic environment". The Panelists each covered a group of Arctic Council actors and provided their point of view in brief statements:

- Cynthia Jacobson (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, CAFF) explained the importance of contributions of Arctic Council observers to the forum's working groups.
- Liisa Peramaki represented the government of Canada (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) and shared her views on the potential of scientific cooperation through the Arctic Council.
- Åsa Larsson-Blind (Sámi Council) explained the role of Permanent Participants and the importance of support, also from outside the Arctic, while maintaining the self-determination of Arctic indigenous people.
- Kathrin Stephen (IASS) reported from her experience as the German representative to the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) of the Arctic Council.
- Sybille Klenzendorf (WWF Germany) focused on the contributions by observer organizations as non-state actors.

Manuela Krakau (UBA) gave the last presentation of the plenary session. She shared the German Environment Agency's perspective on "Protecting the Arctic environment" and its priorities, including

- reducing of climate forcers and environmental pollution, for instance by plastic,
- reducing the effects from shipping, including impacts of underwater noise, and
- supporting efforts for sustainable development, especially by shaping sustainable tourism.

Also, raising public awareness in non-Arctic states should be a priority. A current UBA project aims to provide options to strengthen national environmental politics in these regards. This should allow states to further contribute to collaborations on Arctic environmental issues.

2. Working groups

2.1 Working group 1: Shipping including the Polar Code

The working group, moderated by Kathrin Stephen (IASS) focused on the implementation of the Polar Code and ship fuels, particularly a ban of HFO in Arctic waters. The group started with an assessment of the current situation before specifying impediments to further improvements of environmental protection.

The IMO Polar Code (PC) is in force, but there are some gaps and uncertainties: So it is still not mandatory for ships to have an ice class in the Arctic, since this depends on the actual ice conditions. Also, there are uncertainties among classification societies and flag states on ice classes. The PC does not apply to fishing vessels, military ships, pleasure craft, and cargo ships of less than 500 GT.

Since the PC is still very new, many actors do not yet know how to deal with its requirements. Further learning time will be necessary to build up the necessary experience. Specifically: It is currently unclear whether or not the PC applies to domestic voyages and what constitutes "an international voyage". There is no experience yet with violations of the PC. The responsibilities are split between flag state and port state control. There is little experience with port state control to date.

The ban of HFO as a ship fuel (not as a commodity) is under discussion in sub-committees of the IMO. HFO is mostly used in Russian domestic ship voyages, and already banned in waters around Svalbard.

Based on this assessment, the working group developed suggestions for specific activities, to most of which also non-Arctic states could contribute:

- Clarification of PC application (domestic vs. international voyages).
- Increase investments in infrastructure on Arctic routes to comply with PC rules
- Reducing ship wastes and improving ships' capacities to store waste.
- Develop satellite monitoring of illegal oil discharges.
- Create a best practice manual for PC implementation.
- Support the debate on extending the scope of PC, i.e. to non-SOLAS vessels.
- Support adequate port control in non-Arctic states to increase compliance in Arctic waters.
- Discussing a potential HFO ban, one should consider that usage of fuel is a question of logistics: Diesel is available everywhere, LNG is not. Also, if taking a "source-to-propeller" point of view, LNG is not necessarily better than diesel in terms emissions.
- Generally, the PC regulations could be regarded as an effort to reduce the overall number of ships in the Arctic.

2.2 Working group 2: Climate protection and air pollution control

The working group, moderated by Enno Harders (UBA), focused on different angles of influence for observer states of the Arctic Council, mainly looking at Germany as an example. Main findings were that:

- The Arctic is perceived as hotspot and "high-speed indicator" of climate change;
- The Arctic Council, including the Permanent Participants, has to deal with challenges;
- Global actions are needed;
- Observer states should take the precautionary approach into account for reasonable decisions and to promote impact assessments for economic developments.

Observer states have several active roles with regard to the protection of Arctic environment:

- As consumers of oil and gas from the Arctic region, they should push for requirements to reduce flaring or improve similar environmentally relevant conditions.
- As producers and users of coal with its consequences (emissions of gases and black carbon) which may affect the Arctic region, also observer states need to reduce black carbon and mercury emissions. The German "Energiewende" and measures within the transport sector perceived as a good step in this direction.
- As promoters of the "precautionary approach" within the Arctic Council, observer states should build up more support for impact assessments, also when new technologies are to be established.
- As supporters of research, observer states should contribute to areas, which are underrepresented up to now. Such research does not need to be facilitated just under the Arctic Council, but could also take place in cooperation with Northern universities.
- As promoters of public awareness, observer states should involve the public and especially journalists more, e.g. by transferring scientific results and recommendations to mitigate climate change or improve species protection worldwide. Also, observer states should address that people already belong to/in the Arctic, including the required infrastructure and the use of natural resources.

- As supporters of the Permanent Participants, observer states could contribute to their funding, but also by involving indigenous peoples in projects for environmental protection in the Arctic (e.g. a project with Russia under the German International Climate Initiative).
- As promoters of protected areas for climate resilience, observer states should address the need of monitoring, reporting and control mechanisms in protected area, which may hamper the implementation. As an example, the “World Heritage Site Laponia” (Swedish Lapland) shows how local people can be involved and how sustainable management can work.
- In general, political coherence is important for each state to give the right signals.

2.3 Working group 3: Sustainable Arctic tourism

The working group, moderated by Arne Riedel (Ecologic Institute), approached Arctic tourism as a cross-cutting issue and identified channels of communication on how to address the different issues. As an observer state to the Arctic Council, the influence on national laws and regulations in Arctic countries is very limited to non-existent. This means that the main influence lies with the tourists from the respective non-Arctic states that visit the Arctic. Observer states like Germany should inform and educate the tourists as good as possible, particularly in cooperation with local communities, indigenous peoples and tour operators.

Key aspects to keep in mind for this approach were that:

- “Sustainable” tourism has a different meaning for the different stakeholders involved.
- Approaching different stakeholders also allows for a variety of opportunities, co-operations and channels of communications to protect the Arctic from afar.
- Tourism in the Arctic is not only shipborne but also land-based. This means that regional needs of local stakeholders, tourism providers and tourists need to be taken into account to design environmental protection measures.
- Following the right to self-determination and economic development, every region must be able to decide what kind of tourism is wanted or needed.
- An important positive aspect of sustainability can be potential (long-term) benefits and positive influence on the region (“giving something back to the region”).
- It is necessary to include local stakeholders and rightholders (particularly indigenous peoples).
- Larger communities or cities in the Arctic might have a bigger potential to adapt more easily to economical or environmental changes than smaller communities but are still struggling. For the protection from afar, however, it is important to consider that best practices and guidelines are often developed by these larger communities.

3. Conclusion

The workshop „How to protect the Arctic from afar" reminded the participants that while the Arctic is a large and diverse place, its people and ecosystems, its environmental issues and their solutions are very much interconnected. These connections extend beyond the Arctic region and link to non-Arctic states as well, with their patterns and levels of land-use, production and consumption.

The perspectives provided today came from a diverse range of actors from Arctic states, non-Arctic states, environmental organizations and science. All of them highlighted the relevance for coordinated action across borders to protect the Arctic environment.

The people and states outside the Arctic, including Germany, have a responsibility not to harm the Arctic and its peoples. The in-depths exchanges in the working groups today allowed the participants to gain new perspectives from their discussion partners. Their combined efforts narrowed down the challenges that Arctic regions face with regard to the pressures and drivers in three selected issues.

The constructive exchanges across disciplines also helped to identify angles how non-Arctic states, including Germany, can actively and effectively contribute to 1) reducing climate forcers, 2) mitigating pressures from maritime shipping in the Arctic and 3) helping to shape sustainable Arctic tourism.

The identified measures and the suggestions on how to approach them practically can be translated into new cooperation with a range of partners:

- The indigenous peoples' communities, with their rights and their respect for life in the Arctic are an important ally in protecting the environment. Respecting these rights and including them in planning and implementation of protection measures is key to regionally tailored and effective approaches.
- The cooperation with Arctic states in international fora like the IMO can bring Arctic issues to global attention. An exchange of best practices and information directly between states can also allow to bring national environmental policies ahead. However, political will is required from all sides, to take the next steps from planning to action.
- In many areas, engaging in a dialogue with the businesses and industries operating in the Arctic (e.g. in tourism, fisheries, shipping, energy and mineral resources) will also be key to reach effective solutions across borders.

The workshop provided a good starting point to overcome the separations between disciplines, countries and affiliations. It is a promising sign that new ideas and potentials on how to protect the Arctic are at hand. However, we need a continuation of these conversations to deepen the personal connections that were established today, to build consensus on what should be done and to gather the political will to bring the ideas to effective actions. This type of continued exchange can allow us to achieve what all participants of today's workshop are aiming for: A better protection of the Arctic environment – from near and afar.

Annex 1: Workshop Programme of 24 October 2018

| Time | Programme | | |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| 09:00 – 09:30 | Registration | | |
| 09:30 – 09:50 | Moderation: R. Andreas Kraemer, Ecologic Institute Opening remarks/ Welcome address Heike Herata, German Environment Agency Ritva Koukku-Ronde, Ambassador of Finland | | |
| 09:50 – 10:35 | Introductory talk Protecting the Arctic environment – a perspective of the German Environment Agency Manuela Krakau, German Environment Agency | | |
| 10:35 – 10:50 | Coffee break | | |
| 10:50 – 12:00 | Perspectives of Arctic Council actors on the protection of the Arctic environment Perspectives from/by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liisa Peramaki, Government of Canada• Åsa Larsson-Blind, Saami Council• Cynthia Jacobson, Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)• Kathrin Stephen, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS)• Sybille Klenzendorf, WWF Germany | | |
| 12:00 – 12:30 | Arctic Shipping and the Environment: Trends, Impacts and Governance Hendrik Schopmans, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) | | |
| 12:30 – 12:35 | Division of participants into working groups | | |
| 12:35 – 13:30 | Lunch break | | |
| 13:30 – 15:45 | Moderated working groups on potential cooperation on Arctic environmental protection in specific areas | | |
| | Working group 1: Shipping, including Polar Code Moderation: Kathrin Stephen, IASS | Working group 2: Climate protection and air pollution control Moderation: Enno Harders, German Environment Agency | Working group 3: Sustainable Arctic tourism Moderation: Arne Riedel, Ecologic Institute |
| 15:45 – 16:00 | Technical Break and return to the plenary | | |
| 16:00 – 16:45 | Reports from the working groups and discussion | | |
| 16:45 – 17:00 | Wrapping up and outlook | | |

Annex 2: Moderator's Summary on "How to Protect the Arctic from afar"

R. Andreas Kraemer

Our event today reminded everyone that the Arctic is a large and diverse place, where things are nevertheless very much interconnected. That is true for regions, activities and ecosystems in the Arctic. It is also true for the Arctic being connected, in manifold ways, to the non-Arctic countries and regions, with their patterns of land use, production and consumption. We find the Arctic to be strongly affected by emissions, resource pressures, activities, policies and regulation, and conservation efforts in non-Arctic areas.

The people and states outside the Arctic, including Germany, don't own the Arctic. They may have some rights there, notably rights of access, but, more importantly, they have responsibilities. They have responsibility not to harm the Arctic and its peoples.

The indigenous peoples' of the Circumpolar North have lived in the region and shaped it for thousands of years. Their communities, ways of life, customs and customary rights are older than any of the states that now dominate Arctic governance. It is these people that have rights in the Arctic, but their understanding of rights is different to what you find outside the Arctic. In the region, rights come with responsibilities and command respect for life in the Arctic in ways that non-Arctic people find hard to understand, including and especially most economists.

In our discussion, we find it relatively easy to talk in general about pressures and drivers, and more difficult to formulate concrete steps to act on the responsibility we have not to harm the Arctic and its people. In the working groups today, however, we found a number of ideas that may be acted upon.

It is therefore possible to formulate solutions. But is there agreement, let alone consensus, on what should be done? Is delivery of the solutions possible given the international legal, economic and political order, and given the governance structure we have in and for the Arctic? Is there the political will? Can it be found? Today, we have covered only part of the ground from ideas to effective actions.

We all became aware, again, of the tension there is among the indigenous peoples, the Arctic and the non-Arctic states, and the powerful and often well capitalized industries that operate in the Arctic across borders. Fishing and maybe aquaculture, shipping, and the extraction of oil, gas, and mineral resources come to mind. These industries are sufficiently powerful and well-connected to determine the laws and regulations that govern their behaviour.

In today's discussion we addressed the question of "How to Protect the Arctic from afar", from a non-Arctic country like Germany. In our discussion, we identified many pressures on the Arctic and the drivers behind. We used examples of cause-effect relationships, and we heard various ideas of what can be done, should be done, perhaps even needs to be done.

This workshop, with participants from various professional, national and personal backgrounds was a good start that we can overcome the separations. It is a sign of hope that we can think and do things differently, and that much more can be achieved.

We do not, or not yet, seem to grasp the big picture. Do we understand the complete footprint of Germany, specifically, on the Arctic? We are not sure we have identified all the pressures that link Germany to the Arctic, and we don't have good metrics to attribute effects in the Arctic to causes in Germany. Even less we understand the impact of policies and regulatory action, or inaction, in and by Germany on the Arctic, the Arctic environment and the Arctic peoples.

There is certainly room and perhaps a need for an Arctic footprint and policy assessment for Germany. That should cover all relevant policy areas and be shared by all Federal Ministries. It should also be shared with other countries, to be complemented, critiqued, improved and validated, especially with respect to attribution of causes to countries and policies.

But, most importantly, such an Arctic footprint and policy assessment should also be shared, from the beginning, with the indigenous peoples of the Circumpolar North. In the language and spirit of transdisciplinary research, they should be involved closely in the identification of the research questions, methods and approaches in what is called co-design of research.

Indigenous knowledge and non-indigenous practitioners' knowledge should then also be incorporated into the research process and knowledge generation, through a systematic and structured process of knowledge co-production.

And the research findings – interim and final – should be interpreted jointly by all involved, including not only indigenous peoples but also other intended beneficiaries of the research. This joint co-interpretation of research results and new knowledge should determine the key messages about what new findings mean, and what should be done, and why.

Even then, there remains another challenge we identified today: There are too many separations among scientific disciplines, policy areas, countries and language areas, and, I would add, the civilian and the security domains and actors in the Arctic. Those separations need to be overcome, not only so that we can better understand the intended and unintended consequences of actions and proposals but develop a shared, holistic understanding of the complex region that is the Arctic.